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Inside this issue:

Presidents' Address	2
Sociology Abroad	3
Community Research	4-5
Student Research	6
Faculty Highlights	7
Events	8-12
Sign-up	13

The S.U.S.A. Scoop

The S.U.S.A. Scoop

Fall 2017

A Message From the Editor

It's a pleasure to write my first message as the Director of Editorial for the Sociology Undergraduate Student Association (S.U.S.A.) newsletter. I hope that everyone had a relaxing and enjoyable holiday, because it's time once again to get back to work.

Since joining this association I have had the chance to work with an amazing group of people. The 2017/2018 executive members of S.U.S.A. are committed individuals who dedicate their time and energy into organizing events and promoting

the association around campus.

As a transfer student, S.U.S.A. has been a great way to familiarize myself with the York community. This position has given me the opportunity to be a member of various department committees, and enhance my research skills through a project in the Falling in Love with Research program.

Overall, my first-term with S.U.S.A. has been a successful one. I'm looking forward to our winter program, and I hope to have the chance

to meet many of you at our future events. All the best for the next term.



Melissa McLetchie

New Beginnings

In August, S.U.S.A. executives attended the first ever S.U.S.A. retreat, organized by our faculty mentor, Professor Deborah Davidson. The purpose of the retreat was to acquaint past and incoming executives, prior to the hus-

tle and bustle of the new school year. Incoming President Desiree Hamilton-Edwards and Vice-President Guneet Singh did a wonderful job facilitating ice breakers, and the presentations by Ghazal Haidary and Wendy Chappel were

insightful and informative. We also had the pleasure of welcoming Professors' Larry Lam and Lesley Wood to the retreat. This event was a great way to start off the new school year.

A Message From the President



Hello To Our Readers,

This has been an exciting semester for S.U.S.A. and I am proud to be President. We have had some wonderful events so far and it wouldn't have been possible without our general members, enthusiastic volunteers and incredible executive team.

This year the majority of our executive team has been made up of new members who have been wonderful at stepping up to the plate and doing their best to plan events and provide enjoyable experiences to our general members, and I would like to thank them for that. I'd like to thank our general members for taking the initiative and getting involved with S.U.S.A as volunteers, we hope to provide more opportunities like this in the future. From new faces to returning, I hope that we can all grow together through S.U.S.A.

I would also like to say thank you to the Sociology Department for the consistent and unrelenting support they have shown S.U.S.A. and especially to our faculty Mentor and "SUSA Mom", Deborah Davidson for all of her support and guidance.

I look forward to the events that we have coming up in the winter semester such as our Alumni Networking event, Socials, Meet and Greet, and the Undergraduate Conference. I am excited to meet more general members at these events while we continue to bridge the gap between the Sociology Department and its students.

Sincerely,

Desiree Hamilton-Edwards

President 2017/18

Europe Through The Eyes of a Sociology Student

“It made me realize how grateful I am for sociology.”

There is no single word to describe my summer abroad, it was intense, awakening, crazy, fun, risky... I could go on. As a new traveller, meeting different people from all over the world, eating distinct cuisines, experiencing various terrains, sights, smells, atmospheres and environments had my senses overwhelmed at times.

I really enjoyed observing the locals and learning about their culture.



Aiman Zada (Director of Mentorship) in France.

It didn't take me long to realize that my interpretation of these observations was influenced by the discipline of sociology. It was fun to not just rely on textbooks but actually study real people.

Although I didn't conduct any formal research, I believe that as aspiring sociologists, we are influenced by the lived experiences of others. One thing that stood out to me during my trip was how young people dated in a different countries. I would compare my observations and understandings to Canadian norms, and what I am accustomed to.

Another thing I was drawn to was how women were treated as well as how people created and socialized their gender to one another in different countries. I absolutely enjoyed comparing my observations to what I had seen in France, the Netherlands, and Spain. Not only did this teach me about the countries I was visiting, but also about Canada. The analytic process

was like second nature, and I found myself *wanting* to learn more about these interactions and behaviours without anyone having to ask me to study them.

This trip further reinforced my identity as a sociologist, and reaffirmed my decision to be in this field. While I was abroad I thought of many great topics that I would like to study in more depth in the future.

My time over-seas made me realize how grateful I am for sociology. It is truly a discipline to be celebrated and appreciated by everyone, not just sociologists.

“It was fun to not just rely on textbooks, but actually study real people.”



weSpeak - Heterosexual Black Men Building Resilience to HIV in Ontario

This semester I had the pleasure of interviewing Desmond Miller, who is the Community Research Coordinator for a local research initiative aimed at mobilizing African, Caribbean, and Black (ABC) heterosexual men to reduce their vulnerability to HIV, promote resilience to HIV, and promote meaningful involvement in community responses to HIV.

MM: Where did you study, and what program were you in?

DM: At first I studied at the University of Toronto where I completed a Bachelor of Physical and Health Education. Later I studied at York University and I completed a Master of Education.

MM: How did you get involved in research after you graduated?

DM: When I graduated from my undergrad, I was working a couple different jobs in the faculty where I had studied. While working in the leadership office I started an initiative for Black History Month because when I was a student at U of T, there wasn't any kind of event to recognize it. Part of that project involved doing a display that explored the history of people of African descent within Canada, within the University of Toronto, and how they contributed to both academics and athletics. In this research I was interviewing people from the 1950s to the 2000s, two people per decade. From doing this kind of work I developed an interest in doing more research and ended up getting connected with a professor at York University for another initiative. I've stayed in research since then, it's something that I'm interested in and I enjoy doing it.

MM: What is the project that you're currently working on?

DM: The project is called **weSpeak, heterosexual Black men building resilience to HIV in Ontario**, and it's a five year project happening from 2016 to 2021 in four cities across Ontario— Toronto, Ottawa, London, and Windsor. We're working with men who self identify as African, Caribbean or Black, who identify as heterosexual and are over the age of 16. We're trying to improve our understanding around the conditions that help HIV to spread. We're really trying to raise awareness around HIV prevention while getting men to be more committed to preventing HIV. Finally, we're trying to focus on community responses, and the way that heterosexual Black men can be involved in the process to improve their own health and the overall health of Black communities.





MM: Why is HIV awareness particularly important in the ABC community?

DM: In Ontario, the population of Black people is about 4% of the total population. People of African descent who are living with HIV, and contracted it from heterosexual contact, make up approximately 20% of all people living with HIV in Ontario. Part of the reason why we are focusing on men is that since HIV became recognized as a major issue in the late 80s early 90s, a number of different groups have been engaged in those responses. However, heterosexual men, especially heterosexual Black men is one group who has not been as engaged as it could be. We're not just looking at this from a biomedical perspective, or just focusing on how to change peoples' behaviours. We're really trying to understand what it means to be Black, what it means to be a man, what it means to be heterosexual, and how these different identities influence the multiple dimension of our lives.

MM: What are the stages of your research process?

DM: We completed stage one last year where we did focus groups and individual interviews with men who identify as Black, as heterosexual, and are living in the GTA. This gave us the nuanced information of what it means to be a heterosexual Black man and how we think about our health, HIV prevention, and improving well-being. The next thing that we're getting ready to do in January is a survey in which we're hoping to have 350 self-identified heterosexual Black man participate. In phase two we're asking more questions around demographics, social connections, as well as general knowledge around HIV and sexual practices. All of the data gathered from the first two phases will be used in the third phase of concept mapping. In this phase we will take the data we've gathered and have more focus groups with men who identify as heterosexual and Black, as well as with service providers and other community stakeholders. The goal of this phase is to determine what we now know about the topic, and what we want to do as community members to offer more or different services.

MM: What has the response to your project been like from the ABC community?

DM: Well, it's not always easy to approach people to be a part of a project related to health and HIV, however a lot of people have been quite receptive and enthusiastic saying that they were waiting for something like this. The focus groups and one-on-one interviews have been a great space for men to speak openly in a non-judgemental setting about what it means to be Black, what it means to a man, and what it means to be heterosexual and to think about these things together.

If you would like to learn more about this project you can visit we-speak.ca or email Desmond Miller at wespeaktoronto@ryerson.ca



Student Lead Research



Parental Influences on Student Performance and Goals

This term Professor Ann Kim's Research Methods class (SOC1 2030D) organized a project exploring parental influences on student performance and goals.

In their research, parental education was defined as the level of education completed from an academic institution by parents or primary guardians, and academic performance refers to how well a student does in school or how successful a student is at learning, understanding, and retaining course content and academic material.

The students conducted structured in-person surveys and in-depth interviews with a convenience sample of 81 participants, all of whom were registered 2017/18 undergraduate students at York University.

The findings:

- The students perceived their mothers to have a greater educational influence on them and to value education more.
- There was no difference in a mothers' level of education on student grades, however, there was an influence on students' goals. The data showed no difference in a father's level of education on student grades or goals.
- Parents provide much support to students, and students, in turn, feel an obligation toward parents but the data also pointed to individual motivation and aspirations.



Professor Joseph DiGrazia

We recently welcomed Professor Joe DiGrazia to the Sociology Department at York University. Professor DiGrazia's research interests include, politics, policy, communication and information technology, and computational methodologies for the social sciences. Prior to working at York, Professor DiGrazia held a position with

the Neukom Institute and Department of Sociology at Dartmouth College.

His current research projects examine the emergence and spread of political conspiracy theories, the role of social media in political communication and behavior, and the enactment of state-level legislation on labor rights

issues, and his work has recently been discussed in TIME magazine.

This year Professor DiGrazia is teaching Political Sociology (SOCI 3640) and Social Statistics 1 (SOCI 3030), and he is also the faculty advisor for SUSAs' Falling in Love with Research program.



Professor Joseph DiGrazia

So Pui Ching Award in Sociology

The So Pui Ching Award in Sociology is given to an undergraduate student in sociology who has earned a minimum of 30 credits and is now in second or third year. The recipient must have a minimum GPA of 7.5, must demonstrate involvement in the York com-

munity and financial need.

To be considered for this award, submit the Student Financial Profile available at <http://sfs.yorku.ca/aid/sfp/>. Students with permanent disabilities can submit a paper application form available

from a registered campus service provider. Applicants must select this award from the list available and outline in the personal statement section how they meet the award criteria."

The Tattoo Project

Professor Deborah Davidson is currently conducting research on tattoos and the stories behind them. On her website, thetattoo-project.info she writes, "I conceived of The Tattoo Project because no such secure and scholarly repository exists. As a public sociologist,

one of my goals is to engage wider audiences in sociology and to create collaborative contributions to knowledge. Consistent with my view of how knowledge can be negotiated and created, I have edited a book about commemorative tattoos, the purpose of which is to dis-

rupt boundaries and categories. The book, published by Canadian Scholars' Press is a book that bridges academic and popular audiences."



Professor Deborah Davidson

Events

S.U.S.A. Meet n' Greet

The Meet n' Greet was a successful event! We had a terrific turnout and students were fully engaged in the ice breakers, and conversations about sociology and S.U.S.A. We met a tremendous number of new members who were eager to get involved. The best part about the Meet n' Greet was meeting students who understood the value and importance of being a part of S.U.S.A. Our general members were involved in the adult colouring books, which is a great stress reliever. We also had an office/school supply table, where students could take anything they needed from pens, pencils, binders, folders, locks, etc. It was great to help students in need while giving them the opportunity to meet their fellow colleagues in sociology.

Thank you to everyone who came out! We are always looking forward to meeting our new members – if you can't make the first one, you can always come out to the next events!



Fall Mentorship Workshop

The students that came out to the mentorship workshop were very eager to participate and learn more about getting involved with S.U.S.A. which was exciting to see. Most students wanted to be mentors but a few also opened up to the idea of being mentored by others. The ice-breaker games were fun to play and everyone enjoyed them and I feel it helped create more relaxed and comfortable energy in the room. The food was plenty and enjoyed by everyone who attended. Overall it was a fun, educational experience for everyone including myself.

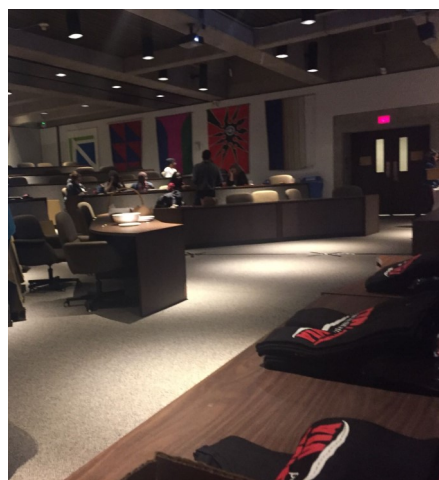


Aiman- Director of Mentorship

Movie Night Social

We had a great time hosting a movie night with the Student Success Ambassadors this term. Everyone had fun watching *Wonder Woman* as they snacked on popcorn and chips.

This event was a great way to unwind before exams!



S.U.S.A. ON CAMPUS



Fall Campus Day



Jacqueline and Desiree tabling for SCLD Club Daze



Pavnaj, Rumbi and Shanelle enjoying the sun at Festival Village



Desiree and Pavnaj at Frosh Brunch



Sandreen stays hydrated during Festival Village.

S.U.S.A. executives, members, and volunteers can often be seen promoting the association and the Sociology Department around campus. During the Fall semester we participated in events such as McLaughlin College Frosh Brunch, Festival Village, SCLD club daze, and Fall Campus Day.

It's always great to introduce students from other disciplines to sociology. Tabling at campus events also helps us introduce the club to new students in the program. So please stop by and say "hi" the next time you see us on campus.



Falling in Love with Research (FLR) is a great professional and academic development opportunity for sociology students to get involved in their department. Students are able to work closely with each other, grad students, and professors to engage in a real research study using quantitative and qualitative methods. All members involved work as a team in a safe and friendly environment, without the stress and pressures of a course grade being attached. This event was very successful last year, we have decided to continue it, and hope to make it an annual project for our department!

The FLR approach is that the best form of learning is experiential - we put the lessons and theories learned in Methods (SOC 2030 or SOC 3030) into practice. We work as a team to take what we learn in the classroom and turn it into hands-on experience, focusing on issues and topics of our interest. Last year, we conducted a focus group and used an online survey to explore how students present themselves on social media. This year, we're exploring the effectiveness of the undergraduate sociology program in helping students achieve their goals.

Once again, we would like to stress what a great volunteer and professional development opportunity this is for your resume and CV, as it offers students the chance to better understand concepts we learn about through hands on experience with research. If anybody is interested in joining our research team, or volunteering as a participant in the research, please email us at fallinginlovewithresearch@gmail.com.

Welcome back, and good luck in your winter semester!



CAREER CENTRE
PARTNERS IN STUDENT SUCCESS

SPEED NETWORKING

with Sociology Graduates

Thursday, February 1, 2018
5:00 - 7:00pm
152 Founders College

Graduates will share their career paths, the knowledge, skills and experience that helped them succeed in their jobs and the types of opportunities that are available to students.

Register and see the full list of panels at careers.yorku.ca/conversations



In partnership with The Sociology Undergraduate Student Association and The Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies.



**Would you like to receive a certificate from S.U.S.A. that is recognized by the Sociology Department at York University?
Just become a member of S.U.S.A. through YU-Connect and attend a minimum of three (3) events!
It's that simple!**

